AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) In a computing device, a method for filtering messages received by a message-handling mechanism, the method comprising:

receiving a message at a message-handling mechanism that is configured to present message data to users;

flagging the message at the message-handling mechanism, indicating that the message should be sent to a set of at least one rule client that has registered to receive messages that have been flagged, wherein the at least one rule client registers by registering a dynamic-link library in a system registry as a component object model object such that the rule client is loaded when the message-handling mechanism receives the message;

calling a first rule client of the set of at least one rule client and providing the message to the first rule client;

~~providing the message to a set of at least one rule client;~~

the first rule client processing the message such that the first rule client extracts information from the message and passes the information to an application program that is distinct from the message-handling mechanism; and

receiving data from the first rule client, the data indicating whether the message-handling mechanism may provide the message to the next rule client in the set of at least one rule client or discard the message. ~~that instructs the message-handling mechanism to take an action with respect to the message~~.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein receiving a message comprises receiving a message in an SMS format.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein receiving a message comprises receiving a message formatted according to a protocol, the protocol belonging to a set containing IMAP4, POP3, ActiveSync, Instant Messaging and MMS.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein calling the first rule client and providing the message comprises calling the first rule client on a defined interface.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein receiving data from the rule client comprises receiving data indicating that the message is to be discontinued, and~~ further comprising, upon determining that the data indicates that the message should be discarded, the message-handling mechanism deleting the message.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~wherein receiving data from the rule client comprises receiving data indicating that the message may be provided to other rule clients, and~~ further comprising, ~~determining whether at least one other rule client is present, and if so,~~upon determining that the data indicates that the message may be provided to the next rule client, determining whether there is a next rule client in the set of at least one rule client, and if so providing the message to the next~~another~~ rule client.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~6 wherein no other rule client is present, and~~ further comprising, upon determining that there is no next rule client in the set of at least one rule client, storing the message for display in a user interface corresponding to the message-handling mechanism.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein the data indicating that the message-handling mechanism may provide the message to the next rule client~~from the rule client indicating that the message may be provided to other rule clients~~ comprises information indicating that the first rule client was not interested in processing~~handling~~ the message.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein the data indicating that the message-handling mechanism may provide the message to the next rule client~~from the rule client indicating that the message may be provided to other rule clients~~ comprises information indicating that the first rule client processed~~handled~~ the message.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein providing the message comprises, making a copy of the message, and providing the copy to the first rule client.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the message-handling mechanism comprises an inbox program and a message storing component, wherein the inbox program receives and flags the message and then calls the message storing component by passing the flagged message such that the message storing component, upon detecting the flagged message, calls the first rule client. ~~providing the message comprises setting a flag associated with the message at an inbox program, calling a message storing component, detecting the flag at the message storing component, and calling the rule client from the message storing component.~~

12-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium having stored computer-executable instructions which when executed perform the method of claim 1.

15-18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1[[5]] further comprising, the first rule client modifying the message.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1[[5]] further comprising the first rule client providing information to the message-handling mechanism~~from the rule client~~ indicating that the first rule client requests read-only access to messages.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein each of the rule clients of the set of rule clients is ordered such that rule clients requesting read-only access to messages are called prior to rule clients requesting write access to the messages. ~~A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions which when executed perform the method of claim 15.~~

23. (Currently Amended) In a computing device, a system for filtering messages received by a message-handling mechanism, the system comprising:

a message-handling mechanism coupled to a storage component and to a rule client, the message-handling mechanism being configured for performing the following:

receiving a message;

flagging the message indicating that the message should be sent to the rule client that has registered to receive messages; and

providing the message to the rule client rather than storing the message in the storage component; and

the rule client being configured for performing the following:

registering to receive messages that are flagged by registering a dynamic-link library in a system registry as a component object model object such that the rule client is loaded when the message-handling mechanism receives the message;

processing the message by extracting information from the message and passing the information to an application program; and

returning data to the message-handling mechanism indicating whether the message-handling mechanism may provide the message to another rule client or discard the message.

~~a rule client;~~

~~a message-handling mechanism coupled to the rule client to pass received messages to the rule client and to interpret data returned from the rule client for each message regarding further processing of that message; and~~

~~a program corresponding to a rule client and coupled for communication with the rule client, the rule client evaluating data in the messages received from the message-handling mechanism, and communicating data corresponding to at least one of the messages to the program based on the evaluation.~~

24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 23 wherein, upon receiving the data from the rule client indicating that the message-handling mechanism may provide the message to another rule client, the message-handling mechanism stores the message in the storage component. ~~data returned from the rule client for one of the messages indicates that the message may be provided to another rule client or stored in a user interface.~~

26. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 23 wherein the data returned from the rule client for ~~one of~~ the message[[s]] indicates that the rule client was not interested in handling the message.

27-28. (Canceled)